



## Bible Study – Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe Year C

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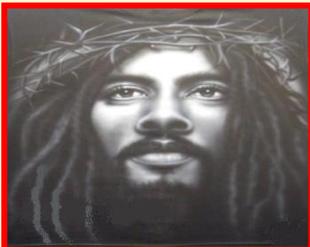
“Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, “If you are King of the Jews, save yourself.” Above him there was an inscription that read, “This is the King of the Jews.” Lk. 23: 36-38

### Reading I: 2 Samuel 5:1-3

#### WHY IS YOUR KING ON A CROSS?

*“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. ...”* These are the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”. He could not remain comfortable in Atlanta and fight injustice. He had to ascend the cross of injustice before he could obtain the crown of freedom. He knew that his King, Jesus, died on a cross of injustice and humiliation for the salvation of all. Dr. King imitated the Word of God and the Creator of the universe. He knew why his King was on a cross.

The first reading shows all of the northern tribes of Israel coming to David after the death of Saul and anointed him king over all Israel (vv. 1-3).



#### IS THIS YOUR IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE?

They first claimed their blood relationship with him. Then they recognized that God ordained both David’s success in delivering them and that he was destined to rule over them (2 Sam 16:1-19 and Ch. 7). They also recalled that the prophet Nathan told Saul to go to Bethlehem and anoint David as king of the Chosen People (1 Sam. 16). Finally, they pledged their allegiance by anointing him (v. 3). Before accepting the offer, David made a covenant with God to which the tribes swore allegiance. Though David lived as an outlaw at Hebron, all Israel accepted him as King. From the lineage of David (Is. 9:6-7) would come the King of Kings, Jesus, who would die on a cross.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: What is our idea of a King? What is your image of Jesus Christ? What humiliations do you suffer for the sake of Christ?

### THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CHRIST THE KING

**86** “... the People of God share in the *royal* office of Christ. He exercises his kingship by drawing all men to himself through his death and Resurrection. Christ, King and Lord of the universe, made himself the servant of all, for he came “not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” For the Christian, “to reign is to serve him,” particularly when serving “the poor and the suffering, in whom the Church recognizes the image of her poor and suffering founder. The People of God fulfills its royal dignity by a life in keeping with its vocation to serve with Christ.”

### Reading II: Colossians 1:12-20

#### WHY IS YOUR KING ON A CROSS?

The Letter to the Colossians is bursting with Pauline terminology and Theology. St. Paul teaches that we have been saved to share in Christ’s inheritance of holiness and membership in the Kingdom of God. Verses 12-14 are part of a prayer of thanksgiving. The Colossians had reasons to be thankful. God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, through the death of Jesus on the Cross, had restored them to their inheritance of the “*saints of light*” (vv. 11-13). Therefore, they knew why their King, Jesus, was on the Cross of Salvation.

Verses 15-20 are part of a “*Christ Hymn*” like the Christ Hymn in Phil. 2:6-11. Here we have one of the most profound statements about the person of Christ in the New Testament. Christ is “the image of the invisible God,” the human face of our God. He is “the firstborn of all creation,” because everything was created through His mediation. He is the perfect mediator. He is the One who joins the wisdom of God, as being created “at the beginning of God’s work” (Prov. 8:22). He is the starting point of redemption. The frequent use of the word “*all*” emphasizes His supremacy. He is the head of the body, the Church. His death on the cross reconciled everything, whether on earth or heaven, to himself. Jesus created His Kingdom from the Cross. That is why our King is on a cross. DISCUSSION QUESTION: Who is Jesus to you? Write a brief description.

**Gospel: Luke 23:35-43**

**WHY IS YOUR KING ON A CROSS?**

Some would say that it is a condition of the human mind to accept the acts of a leader as "good". Others would say that this condition is defined as hero worship and is a foolish or excessive admiration of someone. Over the centuries, a king has been defined as a male ruler of a country who usually inherits his position and rules for life. Whether the king is good or bad, he always has a following. But what if a king, our leader, is not perfect, loves the poor, requires self-sacrifice and suffers persecution and death for his subjects. Is he still a king? Is he still our hero?

As Christians, Jesus the Christ is the ruler of our lives, the Creator of all things, the Awesome Ruler, Gentile Redeemer, God with us, the Living Truth and the King of Kings. He built His kingdom from the wood of the Cross. That is why our King is on a cross.

The Gospel reveals that the people that stood by watching the execution of Jesus did not see Him as King. The rulers, Sadducees and Pharisees, remembered Jesus' reference of Himself as the Son of God (Matt. 27:43) and jeered at Him. They saw an imposter. They did not see the human face of their Invisible God. Their god would not be placed on a cross of suffering. The soldiers mocked Him and offered Him cheap wine to dull the pain of His suffering. They challenged Jesus to be selfish and save just Himself. They did not see the Redeemer of all things. The selfish thief appealed to Jesus with personal motives. He said, "Save yourself and us" (v. 39). Perhaps even in death the thief sought to satisfy his need for earthly power. He did not see the first born of all creation. His messiah would not be on a cross of injustice. He did not see the perfect mediator who made all things new.

The righteous thief, who rebuked the statements of the selfish thief, realized that he was suffering for what he had done (v. 41). He saw the innocence of Jesus, rejected earthly power and sought the Kingdom of Jesus, "remember me when you come to Your Kingdom." (v. 42) His King could be on a cross. The inscription above Jesus head, "This is the King of the Jews" (v. 38) shows that our King is indeed on the Cross. By His blood He purifies the world. By His stripes we are healed. That is why our King is on the cross of redemption. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Is anyone reaching out to you like the righteous thief? How do you respond to such a request for forgiveness or help?

**Pray About It.**

**Monday**

Read Colossians 1: 15-20. Where can you find the face of the invisible God?

**Tuesday**

Read Heb 5:6-7. Spend time in service to others.

**Wednesday**

Deut 10:17 and Dan 4:17. List five words that scribe the Power of God.

**Thursday**

Read Colossians 1:11-13. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for all God has done for you.

**Friday**

Attend Mass and receive the Eucharist.

**The Word King in the Bible**

The Bible used the title king not only of human rulers, but also of God as the Supreme Ruler of the world (Ps 47:2,7; Matt 5:35). As the Creator of the world, it is His right to rule the universe. Only by His authority do earthly kings reign (Deut 10:17; Dan 4:17).

Christ Jesus the Messiah was born a king (Matt 2:2), came preaching the kingdom of God (Mark 1:15), died as a king (Mark 15:32), and will yet be seen as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16). He functions as a King-Priest (Heb 5:6; 7:1; Rev 11:15), enabling us to become heirs of the kingdom which He has established through His sacrificial death on the cross. (From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

*The Gospel of Luke*, Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Revised Standard Version, Second Edition, Scott Hahn, Curtis Mitch, Dennis Walters, Ignatius Press San Francisco, p. 66-67; *The Sunday Readings Cycle C* Kevin O'Sullivan, O. F. M. Franciscan Press, Quincy University, Quincy, Ill. pp. 407-413; Colossians - Ivan Havener, O. S. B., Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., p. 1181-1183; *Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year C* 2013, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.ND. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 256-258; Image -Christ the King:  
<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=christ+the+king+black+image&id=A3CE5D2368D89788AF805D1B6EA5BBB301FC7C90&FORM=IQFRBA#view=detail&id=A3CE5D2368D89788AF805D1B6EA5BBB301FC7C90&selectedIndex=0>

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2013